GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1685
ANSWERED ON:31.07.2003
COFFIN PURCHASE
PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Journalist Shri R.V. Pandit published a document, which was supplied to M.Ps in relation to Coffin purchases etc. as exposed in C.A.G. report of Operation Vijay, had been done at the expense of Defence Ministry;

(b) whether Journalist R.V. Pandit had the access to Defence files while preparing his document; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) to (c): A statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1685 31.7.2003

The book titled `THE WHOLE TRUTH WITH ALL THE DOCUMENTS ABOUT THE ALUMINIUM CASKET BOUGHT B DEFENCE MINISTRY IN 1999-2000` written by Shri R.V. Pandit was not published at the expense of Defence Ministry. This book was a journalistic endeavour of Shri Pandit and the views expressed in the book are of Shri Pandit himself.

2. Shri R.V. Pandit, a prominent journalist had requested information and supporting documents related to procurement of Aluminium Caskets from the Ministry of Defence (MOD).These documents were already in the public realm, by way of the Question answered by MOD on the procurement of Aluminium Caskets in the Lok Sabha, `Statement of Facts` already sent to Parliament, the Press Conference given by the Raksha Mantri on this issue on 11.12.2001 and a Press Note issued on 11.12.2001, which had all relied on these very documents. On his request, these documents were also sent to Shri R.V. Pandit, who has relied on them in his book.